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Jury Blasts State Hospital

Indicts 3 Former Attendants for Assault; Hits Brutality

By JOHN F. DAY

The County Grand Jury today indicted three former attendants at Cleveland State Hospital on charges of assault to wound. At the same time it presented a restrained but somber and damning report to the people of Ohio on the "men and women society has failed."

The report on the mental institution climaxed a three-week investigation during which the jury looked into every reeking ward and strong room, and listened to 75 witnesses whose testimony sometimes was frightening, sometimes nauseating, sometimes incredible.

Of this institution, the jury said:

"It would be a prison for the well. It is hell for the sick."

The report presented to Common Pleas Judge Samuel H. Silbert focused attention upon the most glaring miscarriages of human treatment, and listed eight recommendations for immediate action, including retirement of nine present employees.

Dr. D. R. Sharpe, Grand Jury foreman, presented the state hospital report in open court to Judge Silbert, concluding in this manner:

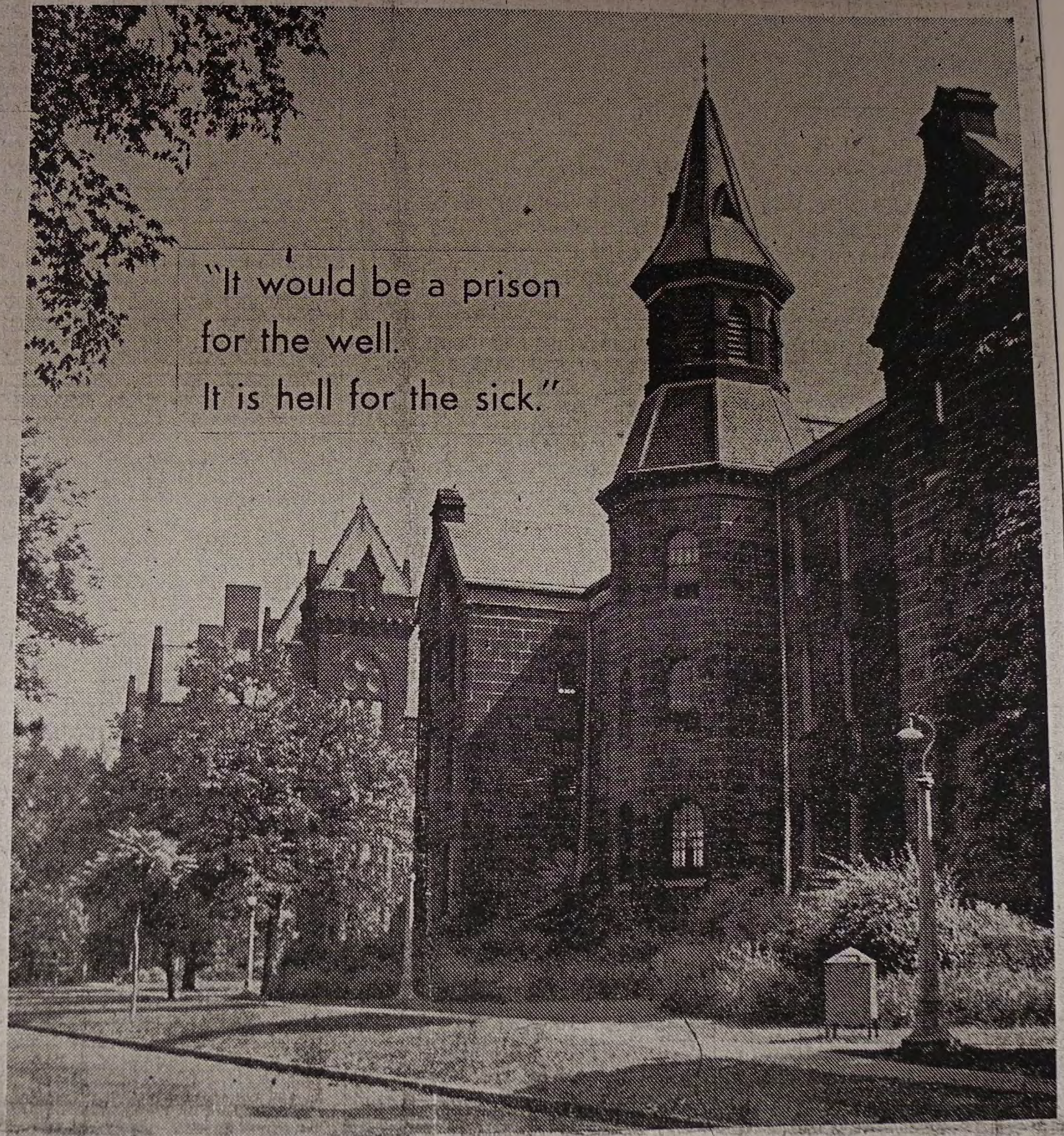
"We indict the uncivilized social system which in the first instance has enabled such an intolerable and barbaric practice to fasten itself upon the people and which in the second instance permits it to continue.

"We are told these inhuman conditions have long existed. If this be true, we indict all who have abetted—or even tolerated—such foul treatment of these unfortunate ill, even as history will indict us if we fail to redress this ancient and inexcusable wrong.

"The Grand Jury condemns the whole socio-political system that today allows this unholy thing to exist in our state of Ohio. The responsibility is widespread, and it must be met. Our governor, the state welfare director, the commissioner of mental diseases, the legislators, the hospital superintendent, the least attendant and we the people—all must share in the guilt for this social crime against these innocent and helpless people. All must, moreover, share in the responsibility for instituting immediate redress of this long-standing and terrible injustice."

The three attendants indicted were Haden Blake, Walter Vent and Franklin Starkey, all of whom have fled the institution.

Blake, now 25, left the hospital hurriedly in November, 1943, after he was tipped off by other members of the hospital staff that an assault and battery warrant had been sworn out for him in Municipal Court. He was charged



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The Cleveland State Hospital . . . the Grand Jury reports.